The Southern PATRIOT

Volume 6 | New Orleans, Louisiana, August, 1948 | No. 6

States' Rights For Whom?

—The Southern Farmer

THE ISSUE IS STATES' RIGHTS NOT RACE . . . "Mr. Barr said, the fight before us is not a racial issue. It is confined strictly to states' rights. It is also against Communism."

(New Orleans Times-Picayune)

OR IS IT?

"We need 1,000 white citizens . . ."
—(From a States' Rights Advertisement, New Orleans States.)

"Under these laws you would be forced to employ, work with and live with people of other races and colors, whether you like it or not" (Note: Mr. Barr forgot even to mention the sacred phrase of "states' rights" in this letter).

A letter to independent voters
BUT IT SMELLS LIKE OIL

"Mr. Talbot (W. H. 'Eva' Talbot, Louisiana's Democratic national committeeman and campaign manager for Gov. Earl Long) said he advised a number of the party leaders that unless the party drops the civil rights proposals and places a 'TIDELAND PLANK IN THE PLATFORM LIKE THE REPUBLICANS' it was not certain that his state would be a part of the 'cracking' Solid South."

(Times-Picayune July 10, 1948

Baseball, Olympics Point Way To End of Prejudice In Sports

By JAMES DOMBROWSKI

Even the spy stories were shoved off the front pages of the newspapers by the news of the death of Babe Ruth, idol of American baseball fans.

There is something of an epic in the Babe's rise from obscure beginning in a corrective home to the dizzy heights of national hero and baseball immortal.

Chicago's Largest Night Crowd

Even as the sun was going down for George Herman Ruth, it was shining more brightly on another fabulous baseball character. Some say that Satchel Paige was baseball's greatest pitcher, and others say he still has no peer on the mound. However, that may be, the Satchel scored a shut-out in his first full game putting his team, the Cleveland Indians, back into first place in a hotly contested race, and delighting the 51,000 fans in Chicago's ball park. It seems clear that in Satchel Paige and Jackie Robinson, the Negro race has demonstrated that it can hold its own against the stiffest competition.

All who love good sportsmanship built on the slogan, "let the best man win" are glad to see the color bars come tumbling down in baseball and other sports. Surely, if prejudice and discrimination because of color are out of place anywhere, it is in the field of sports.

It is individual merit alone that counts in the hot competition of sports.

Family connections, a man's bank account "pull," don't help a fellow much on the baseball diamond or in a 100 yard dash.

It's What a Man Has on the Ball

In sports its what a man has on the ball that counts. That's the way things should be everywhere. Let a man's color and religion be forgotten when it comes to getting an education or a job. Let every man and woman stand on his own feet and be judged by how well he or she utilizes his or her god-given abilities.

This emphasis on individual accomplishment, of course, is the direct opposite of our world of segregation where the emphasis is all on the group.

Under segregation, if a man boards a streetcar—it matters not whether he is the world's most distinguished singer, scientist, or baseball player,—if his skin is colored, he loses all personal identity—and he sits in the back; if his skin is white, even though he be a criminal, he sits in the front.

One of the greatest indictments of our laws of segregation is this handcuffing of our natural impulse to reach a hand to a brother, either in recognition of individual accomplishment, in a desire to be of assistance, or in simple friendliness and brotherhood.

The AP in Nashville likes to interpolate the word "force bill" after civil rights proposals, but segregation laws are really "force" laws because they outlaw simple acts of human decency and force us to suppress the simple and natural impulse, to treat our neighbor as our brother. Such laws are in direct defiance of the laws of God.

Olympic Games Were Colorful

One satisfying aspect of the Olympic games is the absence of all public distinction based on color. In a very literal sense the games are "colorful" with representatives of the brown, yellow, black and white races and all intermediate shades of color. Each man stands on his native ability,——on how well he has used and improved that ability.

On the American team were many dark-skinned athletes who brought new honors to our country. One thinks of

(Continued on page 2)

Baseball

(Continued from page 1)

Whitfield, Ewell, Steele, and Dillard. The initial first place for the U. S. track team was Willie Steele's record breaking broad jump, in spite of an injured leg. There was no more dramatic moment at the games than when Harrison Dillard won the 100 meter dash. Dillard, previously acclaimed as the world's greatest hurdler, had been eliminated in the try-outs, but he went along for the ride. He defeated the mighty Mel Patton and Barney Ewell to win first place in an event that was new to him.

Georgia Youth Sets New Record

Only American woman to win a gold medal in track or field events was a young Negro college student, Alice Coachman, of Albany, Ga., who set a new record in the high jump with a leap of better than 5 feet, 6 inches. A citizens committee headed by the Mayor will welcome Miss Coachman home.

Almost overlooked by the press was the record of a slight Negro girl from New Orleans, Audrey Patterson, student at Tennessee State College.

In a special message to her family and friends in New Orleans, sent from London previous to her race, Miss Patterson said she was conscious of the high honor that was hers in representing New Orleans and the United States, and they could depend on her to do her best. That "best" was good enough to win third place in the finals of the 200 metre race.

Tragic Contrast

Newspaper make-up men often point up the weaknesses of our society in a most dramatic way without saying a word. This was true of an edition of the Louisiana Weekly. Adjoining the headline announcing Miss Patterson's victory was another headline telling of how a Negro business man at New Iberia, La., had been forced to flee for his life. The reason? He had helped some Negroes to register and qualify as voters. When he received telephone calls threatening his life if he remained, he left his home and his business. Fresh in his memory was a similar situation in 1944, when 5 Negroes allegedly were beaten and run out of town by law enforcement officers. One of the men, Leo Hardy, died, it is believed from his injuries.

One wonders if Miss Patterson could have done her best that day in London if she had known what was happening in New Iberia.

Satchel's Arrival *

Times do change. Satchel Paige, the tall sycamore of Negro baseball, who may or may not have been the world's greatest pitcher, makes his delayed arrival in the big leagues, and the event stirs only a minor flurry on the sports pages.

For the benefit of the erudite who plod more solemn orbits for the world's progress in human relations, Mr. Paige is a fabulous fellow who for twenty years or more labored outside the color line. This durable Alabamian, who seems to be a perpetual thirty-nine, met white competition frequently enough in exhibition games to establish that he was around the top in the great art of blazing a baseball. The Satchel was good enough to trim Dizzy Dean 1 to 0 in thirteen innings, and in a quiet moment Dizzy once commented that two such Olympians between them could turn in sixty winning games a year. Satchel, it should be added, thought they could do better than that.

Paige or no Paige, the Negro was forbidden in polite and organized baseball. It was not a subject for discussion; silent evasion was the rule. As a commercial sport baseball year after year saw no need for change. Branch Rickey, to his immortal credit, took the big plunge, and installed young Jackie Robinson at Brooklyn last year. And Robinson, to the great pleasure of practically all, made good.

The traditionalists no longer threw up their hands in horror. No walls tumbled, no stars fell. More Negroes were tried out; some stuck, some didn't, all on the basis of ability. Thus, in the late afternoon of his career, Paige is called to Cleveland at a pretty penny because Bill Veeck's first-place club needs a tough right-hander who can save games. The Satchel should have been there long ago, but better late than never. Here's to good pitching, Satchel.

*Reprint from an editorial in the NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE. Courtesy, Institute for American Democracy.

Courtesy Institute for American Democracy, Inc.

'States' Rights Is Cover-Up Talk'

By AUBREY WILLIAMS*

When President Harry Truman came out with his Civil Rights proposals, the reactionaries and Tories in the South turned on him. Their answer to greater rights for all of the people of the South was that such a proposal would violate Southern Traditions.

WHAT SOUTHERN REVOLTERS REALLY REVOLT AGAINST

What these leaders of the Southern revolt really don't like is the progressive character of the program started by Roosevelt.

These are the things they really mean when they say some of us are trying to destroy the South's way of life, that we are violating Southern traditions.

Reactionaries believe all public power projects are violations of the Southern Way of Life. They are opposed to TVA and REA. (The Georgia Power and Light Co. is always a big contributor to Talmadge campaign funds.)

These Tories believe it is against the Southern Way of Life for small farmers, tenants and share croppers to own their own farms. (The Farm Bureau, which in the South, as evrey one knows, is run by and for the benefit of the big farmers, and the big city interests, has opposed the Tenant Purchase Plan, the Farmers Home Administration and most other government farm agencies set up to help the small farmers.)

The Tories believe it is against Southern traditions to do away with slums and provide people with decent homes. One of Atlanta's leading bankers last month denounced the farm homes proposal now before Congress as being contrary to Southern Traditions. They are against teaching the Negroes to help themselves. (The Ku Klux Klan sent two hundred hooded men into the sleeping quarters of two white women who were teaching Negro Girl Scouts how to become Scout leaders of Negro Girl Scouts. These cowardly Knights of so-called Southern Traditions ransacked these young women's clothes and personal belongings and told them "to get out.")

It is high time that the people of goodwill in the South faced up to the situations that lie behind these Civil Rights proposals.

Responsible and decent people in the South know that only a small part of adults vote in the South. They are painfully aware that a Negro hasn't got the same chance in court as a white man. They know that few white men who shoot down Negroes are ever brought into court, and fewer are ever convicted. People all over the South are ashamed that in Birmingham, the police have in the last few weeks shot down in cold blood six Negroes.

JOB DISCRIMINATION

Good people know that in the big industry centers, Negroes don't have the same job opportunities or get the same pay. They know too that most of these big industries are monopoly-owned and controlled.

Decent and responsible people in the South know that segregation on buses, street cars, and in depots and trains cause people to travel under conditions little better than afforded cattle, conditions which are galling to look at. They know that houses which low-income white people and Negroes live in are for the most part unspeakable and not fit for human habitation.

STATES' RIGHTS

Decent and responsible people in the South know, too, that all of this talk of "States' Rights" is cover-up talk.

They know that reactionaries (with some few exceptions) have prevented state governments from doing anything to protect these people.

Good people know that convictions are seldom if ever gotten in lynchings. Good people in the South know that from past and present experience, Negro people are not being protected by local and state authorities in many of these big industrial centers.

EVILS OF SEGREGATION

Good people know, too, the evils of segregation.

Two school systems means poor education for both our white and Negro citizens, especially in rural areas.

Duplication of school buses, school buildings, teachers, books, and everything else means that none of our children in the country get anywhere near adequate education.

Segregation in our churches is making our churches appear immoral to many young Southerners who knew that the Apostles went out among the black Abyssinians and preached the gospel without regard to color.

Segregation in employment and discrimination in job pay means a money loss to the South. Census figures of 1940 show that the average Southern white high school graduate had an annual income of $1454 as compared to $775 a year for Negroes, and furthermore, both white and Negro wage-earner were paid less in the South.

The Negro worker sets the wage scale for the South.

To keep the Negroes' wages down in the ditch, the white worker and farmer has to stay down there with him.

The central evil in the South is segregation.

Until decent Southerners face this fact, little progress will be made toward solving the racial problem or any other problem in the South.

SOUTH NEEDS MORE DEMOCRACY

The South needs more democracy, not less.

The South needs to have more people vote, not less.

We need to abolish the poll tax and such voting restrictions as the Boswell amendment in Alabama, and the hidden registrar in Virginia.

We need to give the people a chance to vote for the things the South needs.

We need more factories.

We need more processors for farm and forest products.

More and better farm homes, hard-surfaced roads, city homes for low-income workers.

We need better school buildings and more and better-paid teachers.

We need telephones for farm families.

We need doctors and hospitals for farm families.

There is more in this Tory Southern revolt than meets the eye.

Many of these reactionaries declare they will leave the Democratic Party if the Civil Rights program is adopted.

It is to be devoutly hoped they will.

*Aubrey Williams, former administrator of the National Youth Administration, and now editor and publisher of the SOUTHERN FARMER, Montgomery, Alabama, and President of the Southern Conference Educational Fund. This article is condensed from an editorial in the July issue of the SOUTHERN FARMER. This farm journal, with a circulation of more than a million copies, is the first major Southern publication, we believe, to take an unequivocal democratic stand on segregation.

The Southern PATRIOT

Vol. 6 AUGUST, 1948 No. 6

THE SOUTHERN PATRIOT published monthly ten times a year by The Southern Conference Educational Fund, Inc., 808 Perdido Street, New Orleans 12, Louisiana. Twenty-five cents a copy, $2.00 a year. Entered as second-class mail matter October 5, 1946, at the Postoffice, New Orleans, Louisiana under the Act of March 3, 1879.